

Stephen Lane Wood

Donald E. Bright

Department of Bioagricultural Sciences and Pest Management, C. P. Gillette, Museum of Arthropod Diversity, Colorado State University, Fort Collins, Colorado, 80527

Corresponding author: Donald E. Bright (dbright@mail.colostate.edu)

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Stephen Lane Wood was born in Providence, Utah, on July 2, 1924. From an early age, he had a keen interest in nature and wildlife. At age 14, Steve went to Nevada to visit his brother-in-law, T. O. (Ted) Thatcher, a specialist in scolytid systematics, who sent him into the woods to begin an insect collection for a class project. Steve dug his pocketknife into a pinhole in an aspen tree and eased out a small beetle, *Trypodendron retusum* (LeConte). In Steve's words, "The attraction was immediate and permanent." His interest in natural history lead him to attend Utah State University where he received his B. S. degree in 1946 and M. S. degree in 1948, majoring in Entomology. His Masters thesis was a survey of the Scolytidae of Logan Canyon in Utah and their host plants (publication #1). He received his Ph.D. in 1953 from the University of Kansas with a dissertation on a taxonomic revision of the North American Cryphalini (publication #4). During his graduate studies Steve met and interacted with the leaders in the field of bark beetle systematics, which highlighted his burgeoning career (Fig. 1).

After graduation, Steve joined the staff of the Canadian National Collection of Insects, Ottawa, Ontario, and remained there for three years until family considerations and the call of the Utah mountains inspired him to change employment. In 1956, he accepted the position of Assistant Professor in the Department of Zoology and Entomology at Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah and remained there until his death. After retirement, Steve continued his association and his research at BYU at the Monte L. Bean Life Sciences Museum as Professor Emeritus and Curator of Coleoptera Emeritus until ill health forced him to terminate his activities in 2008.

Steve served on a number of university committees and professional assignments. He was editor of the Great Basin Naturalist for many years and created the Great Basin



Figure 1. International Congress of Entomology, Montreal, Quebec. Left to right: Boyd Thomas, Canadian Forestry Service, worked on larval Scolytidae; Steve Wood; Karl Schedl, Austria, world authority on Scolytidae; W. H. (Bill) Anderson, Washington D. C., worked on Scolytidae at U. S. National Museum, Smithsonian Institution.



Figure 2. 1978, Steve working on BYU collection, obviously not on bark beetles!

Naturalist Memoirs series. He was a visiting Research Professor of Entomology at universities in San Jose, Costa Rica and Merida, Venezuela. He was the principal faculty planner in the development of the Monte L. Bean Life Science Museum on the BYU campus and was the Curator of the Coleoptera collection in the Life Science Museum until his retirement (Fig. 2).

Steve authored or co-authored 109 publications on scolytid and platypodid systematics and described and named over 1000 species as new to science. His collection, containing many thousands of specimens, was housed in 300 large museum drawers in the Monte L. Bean Life Science Museum. He donated his collection to the Smithsonian Institution in Washington D. C. In April and early May, 2009, the collection was consolidated into 160 drawers and was transported to the Smithsonian. Steve also built a library of thousands of published articles pertaining to scolytid systematics and biology which was donated to the Smithsonian Institution along with the specimen collection.

During his career, Steve assisted with, or was involved with, several large projects. Probably the most important were a study of the bark and ambrosia beetles of North and Central America, which culminated in the publication of a large monograph in 1982, and a study of the bark and ambrosia beetles of South America, which culminated in the publishing of another large monograph in 2007. The 1982 monograph mentioned above is the standard taxonomic reference for these important forest insects



Figure 3. Dr. Stephen Wood collecting scolytines in Mexico. Photo courtesy of Ladd Livingston who, as an undergraduate student, accompanied Steve in Mexico.



Figure 4. 1978, Steve examining photo enlargements of bark beetle parts. On the desk is a tray of beetles he has collected from all areas of the world.

and will likely continue so for decades to come. Likewise, the 2007 South American monograph will likely not be repeated for decades. Other projects included a study of the Scolytidae of Sri Lanka, which Steve expanded into a study of the Scolytidae of India, sponsored by the Smithsonian Institution and the Ceylon National Museum and a study of the Scolytidae of China, supported by a travel grant from the U. S. National Academy. This latter grant was used to bring Dr. Yin Hui-fen from Beijing to BYU. Neither of these latter two studies were completed and published due to financial constraints but preliminary manuscripts for both were prepared.

In 1981, I contacted Steve and suggested that we unite our efforts and compile a catalog of the world species of Scolytidae and Platypodidae. This collaboration resulted in the publication, in 1987, of a bibliography containing references to over 25,000 research articles, and in 1992, of a complete catalog of the Scolytidae and Platypodidae of the world.

Throughout his career, Steve was actively involved in collecting and observing bark beetle habits. He collected in at least 19 foreign countries, most Canadian Provinces, 25 states in Mexico, and in all contiguous states in the US except Washington and Vermont (Fig. 3). In 1972, he spent two weeks in New Guinea and two weeks in Australia and, in 1976, he spent two weeks in India and six weeks in Sri Lanka collecting beetles for the Smithsonian Institution. He collected in Venezuela, Colombia, Finland,

Central America, Japan and Russia (Fig. 4). His publications are replete with personal observations on the gallery pattern, site attacked, host plant, behavior, and other biological observations of the species treated.

Steve passed away on July 1, 2009, at the age of 84 in Provo, Utah of age-related causes. His influence on the systematics of the bark and ambrosia beetles of the world is immeasurable and will be felt for decades to come.

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